

DAILY CONFEDERATE

D. K. BOCOCK, Editor.
All letters on business of the Office, to be directed to A. M. GORMAN & CO., No. 101 N. 3rd St., Richmond, Va.

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The office of the Confederate needs an associate Editor and general business manager and superintendent, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of A. M. Gorman, Esq. Applications will be received to fill this vacancy. Those applying must be practical printers, and of sufficient experience to take the management of a large concern, with ability to give suitable references.

Address, EDITOR CONFEDERATE.

Whoever will read the article which we publish to-day, signed by Mr. Speaker BOCOCK, of the House of Representatives, in his own behalf and that of his colleagues in Congress, will wonder and be sad; but if he is not a Virginian—especially if he be a North Carolinian—will laugh in spite of his grief. He will wonder to see how far eminent and wise men can wander out of the path of their own duty, to touch upon the prerogatives of others. He will be sad to see how ill a time should have been selected for the aggression, and he will laugh to see that the "pit which they dug for others, they have fallen into themselves," and how ludicrously serious they are crawling out of it. If a North Carolinian—the ninth will be the more agreeable, because it will afford opportunity for a much-needed people to retort upon their annoyances, who, in this instance, happens to be a fit subject for jest.

It seems from the narrative of Mr. BOCOCK, that during the present session of Congress, the delegation from Virginia assembled to consult upon the larger impelling the country. It was about the middle of January, after they had been in session since November. Their conference was secret, and sacred—more especially, relating to "certain public affairs peculiarly affecting the State of Virginia." After a frank interchange of views, it was resolved that the opinion of the delegation respecting a change of the cabinet should be made known to the President—that opinion being that one of the most "important measures" would be a general reconstruction of his cabinet.

"This advice," thus tendered by the delegation, that the President should dissolve his political family, rid himself, at the most important crisis, of his cabinet counsellors, and look out for a new household, was the result of their anxious deliberations, and was communicated by Speaker BOCOCK—who is a most clever and courteous gentleman—in his "most friendly, respectful and confidential manner."

We have no doubt, as it was courteously given, it was politely received; but the President had not asked for it, and he was not inclined to follow it. It had, however, one evil effect. The Hon. Mr. Seddon was wounded by this action of the delegation from his own State, and under the pressure of injured sensibilities, he resigned his post as Secretary of War; and the President thus saw that if the matter were let alone, he might be put at the mercy of Congressional delegations, who, in turn, might drive out the several members and force a cabinet reconstruction upon him, *ad libitum*. Whereupon he wrote to Mr. Seddon, not seeking to sway his purpose, but protesting against the doctrine which his resignation might imply. In that letter he very logically and conclusively shows that not even the legislative department of the government itself, much less a delegation in Congress, from one State, has either the power or right to "control the continuance of the principal officers in each of the Executive Departments."

The constitution vests in the President the choice of their cabinet ministers. It imposes on him the obligation to seek their counsel; and their tenure of office being simply the "pleasure of the President" and the object of the constitution being to establish between them, his chosen counsellors and the President, relations of the most intimate and confidential character—the advice, unsolicited, of any body of men, to the President, to break up his selections and choose anew, was a venturesome act—of supererogation. As well might they have counselled him to resign himself; for it was not to be supposed that a change of cabinet would introduce a change of administration; nevertheless, in view of what he did do, we would not be surprised if they went further, and, in the most friendly spirit, advised President Davis, who he came to select a new cabinet, by no means to choose those who approved the policy of his administration.

In his letter to Mr. Seddon, the President draws the contrast between the relations of a cabinet minister to the Confederacy, to the government and the relations of one in England; and demonstrate, from this contrast, how little it is in accordance with "the constitutional functions of the Legislative Department, to interfere with the relations between him and his cabinet." It was due to himself that he should write this letter, and due to the public, who had already begun to hear that a plot was afoot to overthrow the administration by a congressional cabal, of which the Virginia delegation was the head. Happily the letter of the President and the statement of Mr. BOCOCK, set the rumor at rest. By this time the Virginia delegation must be two things: That their act was extremely injudicious, for however friendly it might be, and however undesigned "to abide the constitutional authority of the Presidential office, or to take from the country the guiding influence of a President in whom we (they) greatly confide." Yet, it had this very effect; for it robbed the chief magistrate, against his consent, of an "esteemed and valued counsellor," and secondly, that their time might have been more usefully occupied, in passing the great measures which the necessities of a nation were imploring at their hands. The people will hardly look with satisfaction on this Congressional delegation thrusting itself before the President, with unasked advice, that he would rupture his cabinet, when they, and their colleagues, after a session of two months, in the most trying crisis of the nation, had not matured a single measure, whether of his or their suggestion; by which the Executive arm has to be strengthened, so as to carry on the defence of the country. It was an intrusion, and was legitimately exposed.

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It is the duty of the citizens everywhere to organize for their mutual protection, hunt up and destroy these outlaws and robbers wherever found. This course has been pursued in several counties with good results.

We learn that information has been received by the military authorities here that a large body of the enemy's cavalry, are advancing from Washington, N. C., towards the Wilmington & Weldon Road. It is said they passed through Greenville, on Saturday last, and by the latest account, were in one mile of Tarboro'.

It will be seen by advertisement in to-day's paper that the Adjutant General has ordered the Home Guard of all the counties east of the Blue Ridge to report for duty in the field, at this place, with all possible dispatch.

We look upon the fall of Columbia as the prelude to a glorious change of luck. Some one said to us a day or two ago, that "we had reached the bottom." We are pretty low down, it is true, and it is not unreasonable now, to expect that "we may go up."

The Assistant Secretary of War has telegraphed to Lieut. Gen'l Holmes that a general exchange has been agreed upon; and all the Yankee prisoners will be delivered in fifteen days. We notice gangs passing through this place daily. When they go, we hope there will not be one left. Now is a good time for any one so disposed to "fall into line."

In the interim, while we are looking about for an Associate editor, we would be glad if Generals Beauregard, or Hood, or Hardee, or Bragg, or Hoke, would write us an article or two. The defeat of Sherman or Schofield, or any like topic, would have preference.

THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL.—The appointment, by the President, of Colonel Isaac M. St. John Commissary General of the Confederate States has been confirmed by the Senate. The new Commissary-General will enter at once upon the discharge of his duties.

We have with pride and satisfaction, a large and enthusiastic war meeting which was held in Fayetteville, on Thursday last, and the patriotic resolutions which were passed. Fayetteville was entitled to speak among the first. She is intimately associated with the first glory of the war. It was her sons who met Butler at Great Bethel, and contributed to produce in his human bosom the emotions of satisfaction, which have just come to light, that Great Bethel was not Manassas, or the Wilderness, or Cold Harbor, or other places where lives were sacrificed. Fayetteville, too, has done much as any town of proportionate means in the Confederacy, in men and money; and done it quietly, unostentatiously; but liberally, self-sacrificingly and patriotically. And her sons, in the bloodiest dangers, have faithfully represented the courage, the dignity and the true patriotism of that excellent community. But, Fayetteville must, by this time, know that a war-meeting and resolutions are but the feathers of the fowl—a small part of the game.—They are good and useful in themselves; but, in the great necessities, they are scarce anything. We must not only pledge life, property, and sacred honor, to our friends; but we must hurl defiance, hate and vengeance at our foes. Fayetteville does that—this we doubt not—but her representatives do not always do this. It is time for them to begin. When in the last session of the Legislature Mr. Samuel F. Phillips began to assail the Government, we saw through his movement; and we are no more convinced of his Yankee proclivities now, since he has made a submission speech at Chapel Hill, to the disgust of the good citizens of that place, than we were when he opened on the Government in the last Legislature. We thought, then, that he ought to be exposed, and we exposed him; not as bad, it is true, as he afterwards exposed himself, when he undertook to show how he concocted a scheme by which he might fill several places of trust at the same time, receive the profits, and evade the service, and yet how, for one month, he ought to have been at the disposal of the Bureau of Conscription.

After all this, Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Wright undertook to whitewash Mr. Phillips. Mr. Shepherd, in that style which is called *dilettante*; and Mr. Wright, in a more broadfooted and practical way. They could not heap too much on him. Now, our opinion is, that if any one of the numerous ladies, who attended the war meeting in Fayetteville, had been representing her in the Legislature, she would have had better judgment and better patriotism, than to have fallen into the homages of Mr. Phillips, as Messrs. Shepherd and Wright did. We must learn to hate Yankee enemies, and oppose them, as well those who live among us as those in Boston.

AFFAIRS IN SOUTH CAROLINA.—For the last day or two, rumors have been rife here of disagreeable news from South Carolina, but in the absence of anything reliable, we refused to publish them. We believe there is now no doubt of the fact of the occupation of Columbia, by Sherman's forces. It is said a severe battle was fought on Friday in the neighborhood of the city, but our forces were forced to retreat, leaving the city in the enemy's hands. The *Charlotte Bulletin* of Saturday morning, does not contain a word in relation to the matter; and we have been unable to obtain any particulars.

Many of the sick and wounded from the Columbia hospitals have been transferred to the Hospitals of this place. THE FEELING IN THE ARMY.—Col. Thos. S. Flournoy, and Mr. Funston, of the House of Representatives, addressed a large body of troops in Fickett's Division, by invitation, one day last week. The stirring and eloquent sentiments of the speakers were enthusiastically responded to by the troops. The best spirit prevailed.

THE WAR NEWS.

SOUTH CAROLINA.

The *Guardian*, of the 15th, says that the news from the front is brief, but most important. Skirmishing is going on with the advance of the enemy on Thom's creek, the stream next below Congaree creek in Lexington District, about twelve miles from Columbia. The enemy, it appears, arrived at a point ten miles this side of Jocas on Monday night, from which they advanced to Thom's creek yesterday morning.

The city is now the centre of active military operations. Dispositions are being made, which we hope will be sufficient to baffie the enemy's designs and ensure his discomfiture.

The *Wilmington Journal*, of Friday evening, 17th, contains the following:

At five o'clock this morning the wires were working to Columbia, and at six o'clock communication with that place ceased.

We have no official or positive notification of the fact, but we regret to say that there can be little or no doubt that Columbia has been evacuated by our forces and is now in the power of the enemy if not actually occupied by them. This event was anticipated yesterday as it was known that the main body of Sherman's forces was within three miles of the city that day.

The *Goldensboro' State Journal*, of the 15th, contains the following:

Columbia has fallen. A severe battle took place in the neighborhood of that city, but our forces were compelled to fall back some six miles this side, and consequently the city was surrendered. A report which we give some credence to, reached here late yesterday evening, to the effect that Sumter had fallen. If this be true, Charleston has no doubt been evacuated.

PETERSBURG.

Between 2 and 3 o'clock on Wednesday morning there was a mortar firing on the Petersburg lines near the Appomattox. This was somewhat of a novelty, as for months past, mortar firing has been discontinued. With this exception, nothing of interest has occurred.

Scouts from Grant's rear report all quiet within the enemy's lines.

It is with profound regret that the members of the delegation in Congress from the State of Virginia, find themselves obliged to make a public statement respecting their proceedings on a late occasion. But the reflections upon their conduct conveyed in a correspondence between His Excellency the President and the Hon. James A. Seddon, late Secretary of War, and the publication of that correspondence, render the statement necessary.

At the beginning of the present year, the Confederacy was thought by many to be in extraordinary danger in consequence of a series of misfortunes. The public spirit was depressed. Apprehensions for the public safety were increased by a belief that our misfortunes were partly the result of mal-administration. Prompt, energetic and judicious measures appeared to be necessary for the restoration of the public confidence. After mature consideration and consultation with others the members of this delegation concluded that among the most important of such measures, would be a general reconstruction of the Cabinet.

A meeting of the delegation was held about the middle of January, in which certain public affairs, peculiarly affecting the safety of Virginia, were considered. In the same meeting, after a frank interchange of views, it was resolved that the opinion of the delegation respecting change of the Cabinet should be made known to the President as the advice of friends.

A member (the Speaker of the House) was deputed to communicate the advice in the most friendly, respectful and confidential manner to the President, with suitable explanation of the motives and views of the delegation. He was authorized to communicate the same with any of the Heads of Departments, but, otherwise, the proceedings were to be regarded as confidential. The communication was accordingly made to the President, in person and by letter, and he received it, as we supposed, in the same spirit of patriotism, candor and friendship which had prompted the action of the delegation.

The advice thus tendered by the delegation was that a general reconstruction of the Cabinet demanded by public sentiment and was necessary for the restoration of public confidence. It was given as an opinion of a delegation friendly to the administration. The decision of the matter, was, of course, left to the President with whom it constitutionally rested.

When the President had previously invited this delegation to consult with him, we received with satisfaction his advice respecting legislative business, and we had no reason to suppose that when we should deem it our duty to offer him counsel respecting important affairs in the Executive Department, our advice would be resented as officious.

If we had intended to embarrass the President or the Heads of Departments by an appearance of constraint, we might have invited members of other delegations, known to concur with us in opinion, respecting the Cabinet, to unite with us in action. We preferred to avoid such an appearance, even at the hazard of rendering our advice less influential, and of subjecting ourselves to misconception.

It can scarcely be necessary to state that the members of this delegation did not assume for themselves, or for the House of Representatives, or for Congress, the power to compel the resignation of the Heads of Departments by any expression of opinion. They had reason to expect that some movement would be made in Congress which might bring on a collision between the Legislative and Executive Departments or constrain the Executive to make concessions. We desired the President to conform the composition of his Cabinet to the prevailing sentiment in Congress and the country. We confidently hoped that such a change would, by its effects upon Congress as well as the Executive Department, make the action of the government at a critical period, more efficient for the public safety.

The delegation, in advising the President, did not discriminate among the Heads of Departments, whatever were their individual judgments of particular officers. Their course appeared to be the best suited to all the circumstances, and, especially, to the state of public sentiment, it not required by a sound political principle. We chose to regard the Cabinet as a body of counsellors held responsible, as a whole, to public opinion for the general course of the entire administration, besides having each a separate responsibility as head of his own department. Whatever may be the theory of our government, it had not occurred to us before the publication of the correspondence now under consideration, that, practically, a body so constituted in our political system could, through dependence on the pleasure of the President, become so insignificant that a change of the Heads of Departments could not alter the administrative policy of the government in any degree. It could not be presumed that a body of statesmen in our country, filling these high places, would contribute no independent advice, information or influence to the policy of the administration, or that they would long continue to hold office either in complete subservience to a single mind or in defiance of the general sense of their countrymen.

Of course, we were aware that the President has power to dismiss them at any time, and that he might, for the public welfare, in a great crisis—and that to him belongs a controlling authority and the chief honor as well as responsibility of the administration. We did not design either to abate the constitutional authority of the Presidential office, or to take from our country the guiding influence of a President in whom we greatly confide, and whom we have firmly supported.

It is obvious that the general advice suggested by this delegation to the President—based on a general reason, alleging no fault and arraigning no individual—mere advice to be adopted, applied or rejected by the President—might have been substantially accepted without excluding every particular Head of a Department from a new arrangement. We expected and desired that at least one exception would be made. It would not have been proper for this delegation to indicate to the President, when they volunteered counsel, the details of such arrangements; and, least of all, would it have been proper for us, as a delegation, to single out a Secretary from our own State for partial action, highly as we esteemed the Virginian then in office and as much as we desired our State to be represented in the Cabinet. Misconceiving the spirit of our proceeding, our distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Seddon, without a general reconstruction of the Cabinet, resigned the office of Secretary of War. If we have unintentionally wounded his sensibilities, we deeply regret that such a consequence resulted from our action or from his construction of it.

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It is obvious that the general advice suggested by this delegation to the President—based on a general reason, alleging no fault and arraigning no individual—mere advice to be adopted, applied or rejected by the President—might have been substantially accepted without excluding every particular Head of a Department from a new arrangement. We expected and desired that at least one exception would be made. It would not have been proper for this delegation to indicate to the President, when they volunteered counsel, the details of such arrangements; and, least of all, would it have been proper for us, as a delegation, to single out a Secretary from our own State for partial action, highly as we esteemed the Virginian then in office and as much as we desired our State to be represented in the Cabinet. Misconceiving the spirit of our proceeding, our distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Seddon, without a general reconstruction of the Cabinet, resigned the office of Secretary of War. If we have unintentionally wounded his sensibilities, we deeply regret that such a consequence resulted from our action or from his construction of it.

In a letter accepting his resignation, the President declines to approve the propriety of his decision to resign, because, he adds, "I cannot admit the existence of a power or right in the Legislative Department of the Government, to interfere with the relations between him and his cabinet." It was due to himself that he should write this letter, and due to the public, who had already begun to hear that a plot was afoot to overthrow the administration by a congressional cabal, of which the Virginia delegation was the head. Happily the letter of the President and the statement of Mr. BOCOCK, set the rumor at rest. By this time the Virginia delegation must be two things: That their act was extremely injudicious, for however friendly it might be, and however undesigned "to abide the constitutional authority of the Presidential office, or to take from the country the guiding influence of a President in whom we (they) greatly confide." Yet, it had this very effect; for it robbed the chief magistrate, against his consent, of an "esteemed and valued counsellor," and secondly, that their time might have been more usefully occupied, in passing the great measures which the necessities of a nation were imploring at their hands. The people will hardly look with satisfaction on this Congressional delegation thrusting itself before the President, with unasked advice, that he would rupture his cabinet, when they, and their colleagues, after a session of two months, in the most trying crisis of the nation, had not matured a single measure, whether of his or their suggestion; by which the Executive arm has to be strengthened, so as to carry on the defence of the country. It was an intrusion, and was legitimately exposed.

More than this. If reports in the country do not belie the action of that delegation, they had not entitled themselves to be the special advisers of the President; for report sayeth that they had before given him counsel about the suspension of the *habeas corpus*, and after inducing his action, had abandoned their own advice.

The fact of it is, there has been an inordinate proneness on the part of Governors, State Legislatures, and members of Congress, to intrude upon the President's prerogatives, and to make issues with him. And this has always been done amid the cry of "stop thief." On the other hand, the conduct of the administration, so far as the exercise of power is concerned, will challenge comparison for forbearance and abstinence.

We hope this matter will end where it is. Unless Mr. BOCOCK and his associates wish to contribute to hand us over, in manacles, to the Yankees, he and they, will rally against the enemy; legislate to reform the army; inspire the people; and leave to Senator Wigfall, who is harmlessly, to make war upon the administration. We say the Senator is harmless, because he has no longer the aid of Mr. Foote. When they were together there was danger. But, we cannot let go this without telling the joke of it. Mr. BOCOCK says—"the delegation, in advising the President, did not discriminate among the Heads, &c." Let some lead be struck off—not particular which—so that one exception were made. This is frankly confessed—"we expected, and desired that, at least, one exception would be made." We wanted some "head," but by no means, touch a Virginian. Well, the fun is, they bowed at the altar; and knocked down the very pins they desired to miss; and now they have to mourn that Virginia is left out of the cabinet, and they are obliged to apologize to Mr. Seddon. "If we have unintentionally wounded his sensibilities, we deeply regret—" Funny, very funny. The first time Virginia was ever caught in such a snap. A good lesson to people to mind their own business.

Deserters are committing outrages and depredations all over the State. We are informed by a correspondent that a band of deserters in Pitt county, on the 13th inst., arrested, near Falkland, Messrs. Simon and Kirtland Kittrell, and a school teacher by the name of Smith, and after knocking them down, and beating them unmercifully, carried them off with the avowed intention of hanging them, but the deserters becoming intoxicated with liquor, they made their escape. Our correspondent says a bad state of affairs exists in that county, and calls on the Governor to send the people some protection.

It is the duty of the citizens everywhere to organize for their mutual protection, hunt up and destroy these outlaws and robbers wherever found. This course has been pursued in several counties with good results.

We learn that information has been received by the military authorities here that a large body of the enemy's cavalry, are advancing from Washington, N. C., towards the Wilmington & Weldon Road. It is said they passed through Greenville, on Saturday last, and by the latest account, were in one mile of Tarboro'.

It will be seen by advertisement in to-day's paper that the Adjutant General has ordered the Home Guard of all the counties east of the Blue Ridge to report for duty in the field, at this place, with all possible dispatch.

We look upon the fall of Columbia as the prelude to a glorious change of luck. Some one said to us a day or two ago, that "we had reached the bottom." We are pretty low down, it is true, and it is not unreasonable now, to expect that "we may go up."

The Assistant Secretary of War has telegraphed to Lieut. Gen'l Holmes that a general exchange has been agreed upon; and all the Yankee prisoners will be delivered in fifteen days. We notice gangs passing through this place daily. When they go, we hope there will not be one left. Now is a good time for any one so disposed to "fall into line."

In the interim, while we are looking about for an Associate editor, we would be glad if Generals Beauregard, or Hood, or Hardee, or Bragg, or Hoke, would write us an article or two. The defeat of Sherman or Schofield, or any like topic, would have preference.

THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL.—The appointment, by the President, of Colonel Isaac M. St. John Commissary General of the Confederate States has been confirmed by the Senate. The new Commissary-General will enter at once upon the discharge of his duties.

It is with profound regret that the members of the delegation in Congress from the State of Virginia, find themselves obliged to make a public statement respecting their proceedings on a late occasion. But the reflections upon their conduct conveyed in a correspondence between His Excellency the President and the Hon. James A. Seddon, late Secretary of War, and the publication of that correspondence, render the statement necessary.

At the beginning of the present year, the Confederacy was thought by many to be in extraordinary danger in consequence of a series of misfortunes. The public spirit was depressed. Apprehensions for the public safety were increased by a belief that our misfortunes were partly the result of mal-administration. Prompt, energetic and judicious measures appeared to be necessary for the restoration of the public confidence. After mature consideration and consultation with others the members of this delegation concluded that among the most important of such measures, would be a general reconstruction of the Cabinet.

A meeting of the delegation was held about the middle of January, in which certain public affairs, peculiarly affecting the safety of Virginia, were considered. In the same meeting, after a frank interchange of views, it was resolved that the opinion of the delegation respecting change of the Cabinet should be made known to the President as the advice of friends.

A member (the Speaker of the House) was deputed to communicate the advice in the most friendly, respectful and confidential manner to the President, with suitable explanation of the motives and views of the delegation. He was authorized to communicate the same with any of the Heads of Departments, but, otherwise, the proceedings were to be regarded as confidential. The communication was accordingly made to the President, in person and by letter, and he received it, as we supposed, in the same spirit of patriotism, candor and friendship which had prompted the action of the delegation.

The advice thus tendered by the delegation was that a general reconstruction of the Cabinet demanded by public sentiment and was necessary for the restoration of public confidence. It was given as an opinion of a delegation friendly to the administration. The decision of the matter, was, of course, left to the President with whom it constitutionally rested.

When the President had previously invited this delegation to consult with him, we received with satisfaction his advice respecting legislative business, and we had no reason to suppose that when we should deem it our duty to offer him counsel respecting important affairs in the Executive Department, our advice would be resented as officious.

If we had intended to embarrass the President or the Heads of Departments by an appearance of constraint, we might have invited members of other delegations, known to concur with us in opinion, respecting the Cabinet, to unite with us in action. We preferred to avoid such an appearance, even at the hazard of rendering our advice less influential, and of subjecting ourselves to misconception.